

Readings July 30, 2023

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

First Reading: 1 Kings 3:5-12

Because Solomon did not ask for long life, riches, or the defeat of his enemies, God gave him what he asked for: wisdom to govern the people well.

⁵At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask what I should give you." ⁶And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you; and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. ⁷And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. ⁹Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?"

¹⁰It pleased the LORD that Solomon had asked this. ¹¹God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, ¹²I now do according to your word. Indeed I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you and no one like you shall arise after you."

Psalm: Psalm 119:129-136

When your word is opened, it gives light and understanding. (Ps. 119:130)

¹²⁹Your de- | crees are wonderful;

therefore I obey them with | all my heart.

¹³⁰**When your word is opened | it gives light;**

it gives understanding | to the simple.

¹³¹I open my | mouth and pant

because I long for | your commandments.

¹³²**Turn to me and be gra- | cious to me,**

as you always do to those who | love your name. R

¹³³Order my footsteps | in your word;

let no iniquity have dominion | over me.

¹³⁴**Rescue me from those | who oppress me,**

and I will keep | your commandments.

¹³⁵Let your face shine up- | on your servant

and teach | me your statutes.

¹³⁶**My eyes shed | streams of tears,**

because people do not | keep your teaching. R

Second Reading: Romans 8:26-39

These words celebrate the depth of God's actions for us. Through Christ's death for us and the activity of the Spirit praying for us, we are fused to God's love poured out in Jesus Christ. Nothing, not even death itself, is able to separate us from such incredible divine love.

²⁶The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. ²⁷And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

²⁸We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to God's purpose. ²⁹For those whom God foreknew God also predestined to be conformed to the image of the Son of God, in order that the Son might be the firstborn within a large family. ³⁰And those whom God predestined God also called; and those whom God called God also justified; and those whom God justified God also glorified.

³¹What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³²The very Son of God was not withheld, but was given up for all of us; will God not along with the Son also give us everything else? ³³Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. ³⁵Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶As it is written,

"For your sake we are being killed all day long;
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered."

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through the one who loved us. ³⁸For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Gospel: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Throughout Matthew's gospel, Jesus and his disciples proclaim the good news that "the kingdom of heaven is near!" Here, Jesus offers several brief parables that explore the implications of this announcement for people's lives.

³¹[Jesus] put before [the crowds] another parable: "The dominion of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in a field;³²it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

³³Jesus told them another parable: "The dominion of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

⁴⁴"The dominion of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵Again, the dominion of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; ⁴⁶on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

⁴⁷Again, the dominion of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; ⁴⁸when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. ⁴⁹So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹"Have you understood all this?" They answered, "Yes." ⁵²And Jesus said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the dominion of heaven is like a householder who brings out of the household treasure what is new and what is old."